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NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
2101 CONSTITUTION AVENUE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20418

June 29, 1971

cc: Rausch
Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Genetics Department
School of Medicine
Stanford University
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Josh:

For more than a year the Council of the Academy has desired to undertake a substantial exercise which could be a new contribution to the cause of peace and disarmament. In its broadest outline, the study finds its origin in the fact that, for an astonishing fraction of our young people, the prospect of nuclear warfare seems totally unreal and a menace to be discounted for future planning. Although allegedly "they grew up in the shadow of the bomb," in point of fact, the majority of such young people with whom I have encounters totally ignore this problem.

In the light of this and other considerations, the Council has approved the undertaking of a comprehensive study of the immediate and full long-term consequences of a "realistic" nuclear exchange under present circumstances. This would include an assessment of the immediate damage, biological and physical damage, the consequences to the workings of our civilization and to that of the entire world, as well as the prospects for recovery, the possible genetic consequences, etc. If this idea appears to you to have merit, I would very much appreciate learning from you whether you would be willing to participate in such a study, your suggestions for a chairman, and any ideas you may have with respect both to the conduct of the study and the names of some younger men who might be willing to serve as full-time staff in such an endeavor.

Sincerely yours,


Philip Handler
President